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WILL SCHOLARS TRUMP TEACHERS IN NEW ZEALAND TEACHER EDUCATION?

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ABSTRACT *The Performance-Based Research Fund (PBRF) assessment process in 2003 highlighted the research imperative for academic staff in New Zealand teacher education. This imperative was not new: it was implicit in the tertiary education changes of 1990, which ended the university monopoly over degree granting and gave autonomy to colleges of education and polytechnics. Previous assumptions about the roles of university and college academics were challenged. Few teacher educators had engaged in research before 1990; staff were recruited from the profession on the basis of their professional expertise. Developing a research culture alongside the demands of teaching and professional involvement in schools leads to tensions that few institutions worldwide have been able to solve. This paper examines the experience of two New Zealand teacher education institutions in responding to the new research imperative, and then considers the impact of the PBRF process and reporting on policy and practice. It identifies significant issues for resourcing and developing capacity but concludes that research is an imperative of professional practice that has the capacity to enrich our teaching and inform policy. However, maintaining balance and equilibrium among the contradictory demands and pressures of research and teaching is still an essential goal if we are to serve education well.*

KEYWORDS

Research culture, Research assessment, Teacher education, Research development

INTRODUCTION

The New Zealand Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) completed its first research assessment exercise in 2003. The exercise will progressively determine the allocation of research funding to universities and other tertiary institutions, replacing the previous funding model based on equivalent full-time students (EFTS). Thus, New Zealand universities, like those in England and Australia, will be funded separately for teaching and research. The new formula for research assessment has three components: the quality of researchers (60%); research degree completions (25%); and external research income (15%). Unlike the English Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) system, the New Zealand Performance-Based Research Fund (PBRF) process measures the research performance of all academics who teach in degree level programmes and assigns individual grades to each before aggregating the data. For the field of education the first assessment results were highly problematic. While there was considerable strength at the top

end of the scale, large numbers of staff – 74 per cent of those eligible across the country – were classified as R (has not achieved a research platform). Not only is this demoralizing for staff, some of them newly appointed to the tertiary sector, but it creates major policy problems, since the Education Amendment Act of 1990 requires that all degree programmes be taught predominantly by staff active in the pursuit of knowledge.

The published results of the PBRF made very obvious the existing split between achievement in educational research in universities and in other tertiary entities such as colleges of education, polytechnics, wananga and private providers. For example, 95 per cent of staff ranked A or B in the assessment exercise came from universities. The members of the Education Assessment Panel noted the bifurcated nature of the discipline of education in New Zealand between theory-based “education studies” and practice-focused “teacher education” (Alcorn et al., 2005, p. 284). Such a split is historical and is already being challenged by new approaches in a number of institutions but substantial change will take time and investment. If not addressed, this split has the potential to cause widespread damage to the field. Policy and personnel issues need to be handled sensitively at national and institutional levels.

From the 1930s New Zealand has produced a number of educational researchers whose work received international recognition. With few exceptions these researchers were members of university education departments or employed by the New Zealand Council for Educational Research. Few teacher educators engaged in research before 1990. Staff in teachers’ colleges were recruited from the profession on the basis of their professional expertise and for much of the twentieth century some did not hold university degrees. Their employment conditions did not require them to carry out research, their teaching duties were onerous, and they lacked access to substantial libraries and research infrastructure. By 1990 all teachers’ colleges had developed reciprocal arrangements with their local universities to offer jointly taught degrees. Although some college staff taught alongside their university colleagues in these degree programmes, there was widespread acceptance that university staff were theorists and college staff practitioners. Since 1990 there has been substantial change.

The tertiary reforms of 1990, granting colleges institutional autonomy and allowing them to work towards developing their own degree programmes instead of working through a local university, were a catalyst for major new developments. Teacher educators began to see themselves as academics rather than as excellent teachers who passed on craft knowledge. Students entering their programmes were often better qualified than in the past and increasing numbers of teachers were involved in ongoing study and professional development. Graduate teachers were seeking opportunities for postgraduate work. Research thus became an imperative and old assumptions had to be revisited. This paper explores issues and challenges in addressing this research imperative and the impact of the PBRF on the development of a research culture.

DEVELOPING A RESEARCH CULTURE IN TEACHER EDUCATION: TWO CASE STUDIES

Developing a research culture alongside the demands of teaching and professional involvement in schools leads to tensions which few institutions worldwide have been able to resolve: contesting narrow definitions of research purpose, methodology and dissemination; upgrading staff qualifications; maintaining the importance of excellence in teaching; preparing students to be effective practitioners as well as innovators, change agents, questioners and critical thinkers; and encouraging postgraduate research when most students are part-time students and full-time workers. Auckland College of Education and the University of Waikato School of Education have both faced these tensions over the past 15 years (Alcorn, 1995; Middleton, 2002).

In 1990 Auckland College of Education, a stand-alone institution, was the largest provider of teacher education in New Zealand. On 1 September 2004 it amalgamated with the University of Auckland. The journey to this merger was tortuous but the institutional change needed to inculcate a research culture was central. A major impetus occurred in 1996 when relations with the University of Auckland over its four-year Bachelor of Education degree, which included the professional papers from the college, reached a low ebb. The College independently developed a three-year Bachelor of Education (teaching) degree and sought approval from the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA), which was established in 1990 to validate degree programmes outside the university sector. Accreditation to offer a degree required an institution to demonstrate its research capacity.

The Qualifications Authority had developed a broad definition of research, itself drawing on the 1984 Policy statement of the UK Council for National Academic Awards. Included in the list were basic and applied research, consultancy, creative work, development, professional practice, research and development, and scholarship (NZQA, 1993, pp. 30-32). While NZQA noted that the in-depth application of analytic and investigative skills was needed, and that all research activities should include making available outcomes through publication, performance or demonstration, there was sufficient ambiguity to blur the distinction between research and staff development activities in some cases. The definition was greeted with relief by many staff in polytechnics and colleges and was used by Auckland College of Education as the basis for its claim to be a research institution. Designing the new programme, centred on the concept of professional enquiry, was an exciting activity and the development of the new teaching degree provided an opportunity for integration of research and teaching. Critical reflection was both endorsed and encouraged, and key staff shared their experiences at conferences and in print. Middleton (2002) noted, however, that the new attitudes and behaviours were more pronounced in some areas than in others. There was also misunderstanding of research, apprehension and resistance among staff.

The College Principal had already, in 1995, appointed an Assistant Dean for Learning and Research, recruited from the UK, as a catalyst to develop a research profile. As a member of a restructured senior management team but with no line

responsibilities and a fixed term appointment, she was able to challenge as well as support staff. She attended meetings, organized seminars, and prepared a seminal paper suggesting that many staff used any other activity to put off research and that the college culture was anti-academic. She did not pull her punches.

It may be, however, that what we face is an evolved culture where “we” don’t want to be academics (too consumed by theory, too remote from the chalk face) and anything other than giving all in front of (a relatively) small class or supervising students in school is possibly regarded as a management plot to extract more surplus labour value from exploited workers whose goodwill is being taxed beyond reasonable limits. This is expressed as the anxiety that we can’t research; we don’t have time. (Landman, 1995, quoted in Middleton, 2002, p. 144)

She made recommendations for changes to the college structure to allow for greater debate and wider responsibility for the promotion and normalization of research activity. Staff were encouraged to update their CVs to show engagement in research activity. Throughout this period opportunities were made available for some staff to apply for non-teaching periods to work on thesis preparation. The College faced substantial difficulties, as there were few experienced research mentors on staff and most of those wishing to enrol in higher degrees needed to do so at other institutions. The commitment of the College Principal to the process did not waver, however.

At Waikato, a merger between Hamilton Teachers’ College and the University was effected in 1991. By early 1993 former university staff had moved into the same building as the former college staff, providing a significant capacity for research leadership. Some members of the College staff already held doctorates and were active in research, partly because of the close liaison that had existed before the merger. There has been a substantial investment in staff acquiring higher degrees and staff have had access to mentoring and supervision, study leave and financial assistance to buy additional time by hiring assistance at key points. Over the past decade more than 40 staff have been awarded a doctorate. While this has resulted in a potentially substantial pool of active researchers, a number of these staff, in common with others in similar situations across the country, were given a grade of R in the recent PBRF exercise. Such staff have invested years in the thesis process but have not yet been able to develop a platform of publications, nor establish peer esteem as a result of their findings.

The time lag between beginning and completing a doctorate, when one is also carrying a normal to heavy teaching load, administrative duties and responsibility for practicum supervision, is a long one. In addition, as staff in teacher education often embark on doctoral study in mid career, after a period of successful work in schools, they have less time than those in some more traditional academic areas to contribute to the literature. This is likely to be an ongoing issue, one that is shared with other professional areas such as law. All PBRF panels suggested a new category of “emerging researcher” to cover such people. Unfortunately the new

rules will not apply to staff who have worked in tertiary education for some time but are new to research.

Waikato has also been able to appoint or promote a number of professors to provide additional academic leadership and mentoring. This is an advantage in developing a research culture that cannot be overstated. Senior academics with substantial research and publication experience can assist those who are newer to the research endeavor in a range of ways. They can mentor them into the publishing process, involve them in larger research projects, introduce them to colleagues or include them in a conference presentation. They can establish informal reading groups, ensure a flow of doctoral students, and create an atmosphere where higher level research is a normal part of academic life rather than an optional extra. Their reputation at national and/or international level is a spur and encouragement to beginners, especially when the professors are known to have started their careers as classroom teachers.

Increasingly at Waikato the research emphasis has shifted away from a concentration on educational policy studies, history and psychology, although these are still seen as important. The spectrum of research has widened to include an emphasis on learning and teaching, assessment, and aspects of curriculum. Research contracts have included a stocktake of the New Zealand Curriculum, behaviour in a classroom setting, literacy, science and technology education, aspects of leadership, early childhood learning, and the experience of Māori students in schools. School-based research plays a large part. At the same time newer methodologies such as narrative research, life histories and action research have made it easier for some who considered themselves teachers rather than researchers to see the relevance of research activity for their own practice. Such trends can be seen more widely in papers offered at the annual conferences of the New Zealand Association for Research in Education.

Considerable anxieties have been expressed about the possible dangers of establishing a research culture in teacher education to the detriment of teaching. The title of this paper makes reference to Larry Cuban's study at Stanford University of the privileging of research over teaching (Cuban, 1999). This has meant, he suggested, that the university rewards its researchers rather than its teachers, that it is research interests rather than pedagogical needs of students that shape the curriculum, and that staff are less available to students. While some staff at Waikato have become reluctant to work with undergraduates or to engage in practicum supervision, anecdotal evidence is that newer and younger staff are as likely as their more senior colleagues, socialized during the college era, to see teaching as their prime task. But the research imperative has occurred at a time when staff/student ratios have worsened, and when the teaching year has become extended because of involvement in summer semesters, e-education distance programmes and increased compliance demands. It is hard to separate these issues.

As far as promotion is concerned it would be difficult to refute the claim that those who are not researchers will not advance to the higher grades of the university scale. However, for many former college staff, the university has provided substantial opportunities for promotion, as well as for professional development and the opportunity to travel internationally to meet colleagues and present research

findings. In more traditional teacher education institutions, teachers were not rewarded for excellence in teaching. In teachers' colleges as in schools, promotion beyond the basic scale was to managerial posts only.

The imperatives of the new research culture at both Auckland and Waikato have impacted heavily on those who have worked to complete advanced degrees while carrying on with their normal workloads. Many have found the experience exhilarating as well as exhausting. Programmes and courses now demand more of students in the way of critical reading and analysis, while the practicum tasks also demand greater reflection. Middleton (2002) quotes from interviews with staff who feel strongly that courses have been improved, becoming more informed, grounded and outward looking than before. Staff themselves developed tools to critique rather than accept research. There is little evidence to back claims that research has detracted from teaching and the student assessments of teaching quality remain high. Like other writers, however, he identified the impact on staff as also inducing guilt, stress, pressure of time and some jealousy of those who had time off leaving others to cope temporarily with increased loads.

Māori education has a high importance at both institutions, partly because of obligations under the Treaty of Waitangi partnership and partly because of the numbers of Māori students in schools in their areas. There is constant government pressure to find ways to enhance Māori student achievement and ensure that more leave school with appropriate qualifications. Māori academics face a number of pressing issues in relations to their obligations to Iwi and hapu (tribe and family) and are accountable to Māori communities for their research. The impact of kaupapa Māori (Māori protocol) research (Bishop, 1994; Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Smith 1999) has been liberating and enables Māori staff to marry research and Māori worldviews and to critique dominant research models. Such research leadership at national level has been influential, especially as until recently there has been a dearth of research-qualified Māori academics and at institutional levels there were few role models. The appointment of a Chair in Māori education at Waikato was a significant step for the institution.

This success in Māori educational research could have wider implications. Anecdotal evidence suggests that a difficulty in developing research cultures in both institutions has been the fear by teacher educators that they do not yet have the intellectual tools to argue for appropriate methodologies and epistemologies to challenge what they see as narrow, university-dominated educational research, often linked to specific disciplines such as psychology. Middleton (2002) reported that many staff regarded research as esoteric and beyond their capacity. While teacher educators have found some comfort in Boyer's work on the scholarship of teaching (1990) and in the local definitions of research promulgated by NZQA, they have often seized on the area of focus (e.g., professional practice) and ignored the need for investigative skills, theorization, analysis and synthesis. Much of the confusion over what constitutes research that was revealed in the PBRF exercise, which I discuss later in the paper, stems from this basic misunderstanding.

Another issue facing teacher educators is finding ways to make research findings available to practitioners in the profession as well as to academic peers; to create what Brew (2003) calls academic communities of practice. A number of new

publications have been set up during the past decade. For instance, Waikato established two journals in the early 1990s, both peer reviewed, to address these different communities. The PBRF process, like the RAE, has focused academic attention on where research is published, as panels are expected to assess quality work by the academic standing of the journals in which the research appears. Publication in “professional journals”, where findings rather than methodologies or theories are paramount, is seen as less prestigious and less worthy of recognition. However, both are vital. If we want research to have impact beyond a small group of like-minded scholars, teacher educators need to develop new forms of identifying academic influence and rigour. This is a worldwide conundrum that teacher educators must solve if their research is to achieve the aim of improving rather than merely critiquing educational policies and practice.

Both Auckland College of Education and the University of Waikato School of Education are large and well established organizations with a history of involvement in teacher education. In 1995, the Government, driven both by the demand for more teachers, and a perception that the traditional providers were neither innovative nor producing quality, deregulated the field and allowed other institutions, both public and private, to offer teacher education programmes. Most of the new programmes were relatively small. Some were sited in larger public institutions (the Universities of Auckland and Otago) which had strong research cultures but others had no such tradition and prided themselves on their practical approach. For these groups, developing a genuine research culture would be virtually impossible.

FUNDING AND SUPPORT FOR EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH IN NEW ZEALAND

Research activity demands resources but New Zealand researchers in the Social Sciences or Humanities have few sources of external funding. The major contestable funds are dominated by the sciences. There are very few charities or other trusts that offer grants for research and those that do often wish to fund specific studies. To date tertiary institutions have received their research funding through their EFTS grant with a much heavier component being received through postgraduate enrolments. A tradition of postgraduate study is still being developed within the wider teaching profession and thus the stand-alone teacher education institutions have received a lesser direct research component. It remains to be seen what the impact of the PBRF funding will be. Institutions with poorer ratings lost money in this first round but only 10 percent of the research component was involved. By 2007 all research income will be evaluated this way. This will make it very difficult for small teacher education programmes to receive research funding or to have access to research infrastructure such as a research library, access to digital resources, professional conversations with peers, the support of an office dedicated to research funding, scholarships for postgraduate students, travel to national and international conferences and, perhaps most importantly, access to periods of teaching-free time for research through study leave or through other

means. It will be difficult for them to take part in research teams or substantial projects which build capacity.

The major funder of educational research in New Zealand is the Ministry of Education, which must implement policy directions determined by Government. After a period in which decisive management and clear expectations were seen as the key to raising achievement in schools, the Ministry is drawing on research positing quality teaching and the complexities of classroom interactions as key. An OECD report in 2001 gave impetus to a strategic review of Ministry generated research and development (Whitney & McIntosh 2002). This review was concerned to make research accessible and cumulative, and to build capacity. While there are strong perceptions that quantitative and empirical studies are given preference, the general direction is positive. The Ministry has commissioned a number of “best evidence syntheses” to guide policymaking and has initiated a new contestable fund for research into teaching and learning.

Contract research for the Ministry has both pros and cons for researchers and institutions in the current research environment. While larger projects have enabled lead researchers to involve more junior colleagues in both investigation and analysis, the tight timeframes, both for submission of bids and for producing results, create other tensions. Not surprisingly, Ministry officials often want answers from the research that are far more prescriptive and definite than researchers believe is warranted by the data. Many Ministry projects are small scale and bounded. While a few projects, such as the Te Kotahitanga project on Māori achievement, have had a life of several years, others are less than three months. Juggling release time for teaching staff is not easy in such circumstances and can have a negative effect on students and colleagues. Requests for proposals are extremely tight and may be reviewed by officials rather than peer researchers. It remains to be seen if the new PBRF funding, when fully implemented, will assist staff to engage in self-generated or profession-generated projects rather than responding to centrally generated bids.

The Ministry’s policies have placed specific emphasis on curriculum, assessment and learning in a variety of forms and helped to shift some of the focus of educational researchers. The fixation of successive governments with assessment of outcomes and setting standards has also made it difficult for those who wish to critique these approaches to find funding or to have their findings taken seriously in policy debate. This too creates dangers for tertiary institutions seeking to create a research culture. On the other hand, some researchers have found their work adopted even more enthusiastically than they would have wished, given the tentativeness of their findings.

THE PBRF PROCESS

It was in this context that the first PBRF assessment took place in 2003. All academics employed on the census date who taught in a degree programme were expected to submit a portfolio containing, in addition to a list of their publications over the previous six years, the four nominated research outputs they considered to be of the highest quality and significance. They also needed to provide evidence of

peer esteem for their research (such as editorships, keynote speaker invitations, prizes, teaching students who win major scholarships, refereeing), and their contribution to the research environment (e.g., through establishing research networks, building research teams, supervising research theses, organizing research conferences and leading research organisations).

Before the PBRF assessment, TEC (2003) published its own definition of research, developed after lengthy consultation. While unexceptionable to most, it differed from the NZQA definition discussed earlier, excluding such activities as preparation for teaching, general-purpose or routine data collection, routine testing, and routine professional practice. It did not, however, exclude research based on these activities. For the purpose of the PBRF, research is original investigation undertaken in order to gain knowledge and understanding. It typically involves enquiry of an experimental or critical nature driven by hypotheses or intellectual positions capable of rigorous assessment.

It is an independent, creative, cumulative and often long-term activity conducted by people with specialist knowledge about the theories, methods and information concerning their field of enquiry. Note: the term independent here should not be construed so as to exclude collaborative work. Its findings must be open to scrutiny and formal evaluation by others in the field, and this may be achieved through publication or public presentation.

In some fields, the results of the investigation may be embodied in the form of an artistic work, design or performance.

Research includes contributions to the intellectual infrastructure of subjects and disciplines (e.g., dictionaries and scholarly editions). It also includes the experimental development of design or construction solutions, as well as investigation that leads to new or substantially improved materials, devices, products or processes. (TEC, 2003, p. 16-17)

The aim of the PBRF exercise was to assess quality not quantity and evidence of quality assurance was paramount. Nevertheless, as academics were able to submit up to 50 publications, it was difficult for participants or panels to avoid consideration of quantity.

Portfolios were first assessed within each institution and those classified as research active were forwarded to the TEC. Twelve discipline-based panels, of which Education was one, were then charged with peer assessment on a national basis. Public reporting was by subject discipline and by institutions. Thus an institution received an overall grade, and the position of its disciplines was rated. By and large the ratings by the panels were harder than those of the institutions and many staff found their grades were lower than they expected. No individual scores were publicly released but many staff found receiving the envelopes with their assessed scores extremely stressful (Middleton, 2004).

Academic analysis of the PBRF policies and processes has been largely critical. Codd (2004) links the PBRF to what Michael Power called “the audit society”, dependent on the discourse of “new public management”, the underlying neoliberal assumptions of which emphasize “practices of reporting, surveillance and auditing” (p. 3). He cites Barnett’s claim that performativity has become “a new universalizing theme” which is “manifested in the trends towards the commodification of teaching and research and the various ways in which universities have to be ‘seen to be performing’ both locally and globally” (Codd, 2004, p. 11). That New Zealand universities have internalized performativity was demonstrated by their behaviour after the PBRF results were made public. Those that did well overall or in particular disciplines were quick to trumpet this in the press, which published league tables with little analysis. Such publicity focused on the universities but the low rating of the colleges of education was also noted. In a country with a population of four million, this was a very public exercise.

Middleton (2004) draws on both Bourdieu and Foucault in seeking to answer the question of whether the PBRF was “merely a summation, or survey, of what is independently ‘there’ in the research landscape, or does it also ‘shape’ what it depicts” (p. 3). Through a series of interviews, she explored at a personal level whether the PBRF had been “formative of education academics’ self-representation, senses of professional identity, professional decision, or academic priorities” (p. 3). The results varied. While some interviewees “felt belittled by the whole process” (p. 14), others felt their confidence boosted by external evaluation. One noted that “the funny thing about where we work is you don’t really know how you are getting on...with an exercise like this you realise, ‘Gosh! I’m doing quite well’” (p. 15). Some managed to retain their own “self-constructed researcher identity” (p. 14) in spite of being rated R. Some were angry and dispirited, while others came to see improving their score as a new career goal, providing reasons to give research greater priority. It seems clear that the PBRF process has already begun to ‘shape’ what it depicts.

For the field of Education and its standing in the wider research community, the PBRF results were problematic. It is clear that there is a substantial critical mass of educational researchers who are rated as world class or with a national reputation for quality. For example, 97 staff nationally were rated as A or B, the sixth highest number in any discipline. This is obscured by percentage reporting that showed only 9 per cent of education academics in these categories. On the other hand, the large number of academics rated R left education very near the bottom of the disciplinary table (39 out of 41). Māori educators did particularly well with 12 percent of all A and B grades being in Māori education. However, because of the short period between the announcement of the first results and the cut off point for the second assessment, it will be difficult to change the ratings in any major way. This will make it difficult for Education to establish its claim to have an excellent base on which to build research capacity and capability. Other disciplines may rate education poorly. This is a major issue facing education academics nationally.

Institutional and policy responses to the PBRF are still being developed. Not surprisingly, there was defensive rhetoric from educational institutions whose staff were not rated highly, with accusations of TEC and university bias (Green, 2004).

Some institutions may respond by trying to attract “star” researchers from other organizations, a strategy followed in the UK and in Australia. However, given the depressed state of tertiary funding in New Zealand, there is likely to be less capacity for this strategy than elsewhere. Within institutions there will be issues in allocating research funding since this is not tagged to disciplines or departments. One discipline may receive a top rating but have few academics. Others like Education have large staffs and cater for a range of specialist options. One discipline may be placed low on the league table but with a rating not far below the top contenders. Another discipline may head the field in a poorly scoring area.

Given the emerging nature of teacher education as a field, special incentives may be needed. Younger staff moving into teacher education from successful teaching in schools will need specific encouragement and practical assistance to move into research while maintaining their teaching skills and commitment. Education researchers are already apprehensive that, as in England, funding will go to the winners only. Nor will it make sense to make research-only appointments and leave the mass of teaching to other staff since all academics must be counted in the research assessment exercise and the non-research performers cannot be omitted from a university’s submission. Much more important is to reduce the number of R ratings.

Talib (2002) has shown that in England the RAE has most influenced the behaviour of those already moderately research active rather than the inactive or very active. Middleton’s (2004) research indicates that similar patterns may develop in New Zealand. This suggests that the task of substantially improving the research ratings for education overall may be a difficult one. Institutional and personal awareness and acceptance of the research definition adopted by TEC will be crucial. While some will continue to contest the definition, claiming that it excludes activities crucial in education, such as involvement in professional development, it is difficult to argue that research activity that remains unreported has any real validity.

A key policy issue raised by the PBRF results is the justification for the Government’s continuing to fund programmes in institutions which clearly have not established research capacity, given the provisions of the Act that degrees must be taught predominately by staff actively engaged in advancing knowledge. Several teacher education institutions are offering undergraduate and even master’s level programmes, though their research ratings were very low. This calls into question the integrity of the NZQA approval processes and the interpretation given to its definition of research activity. Findsen (2002) notes also the increasing tendency of education professionals to enrol in postgraduate programmes to improve their own practice as teachers and not with the intention of learning to be researchers. In many respects this is a healthy trend, particularly if the programmes introduce them to alternative research-based ideas and concepts, but it militates against strong research training programmes at this level. He comments that most students gained only a “modicum of research capability and the ability to critique research rather than . . . substantive research competency” (Findsen, 2002, p. 7). In turn, this has implications for entry into doctoral programmes and the need for further methodological work before commencing a research thesis.

CONCLUSION

The case studies indicate that the academic climate in teacher education is changing to include research and enquiry, and that teacher educators believe this is enhancing their teaching. The PBRF exercise, however, has shown that the change was not sufficient or pervasive enough to satisfy the panelists that more than a quarter of teacher education staff should be classified as research active. This needs to be addressed but the profession needs to be wary in moving too far or too fast so that scholars come to trump teachers. Building on the strengths of the two cultures – the university and the teachers' colleges – is an essential but difficult task.

Building research capacity and quality in teacher education is a slow process; to date the efforts have been piecemeal and individualized. Since much research comprises small-scale New Zealand studies, it is often difficult for new academics to find publishing outlets outside the local ones and thus establish a record of peer esteem beyond the local or national. Diffidence and the lack of sufficient mentors militate against progress. The isolated nature of much study at doctoral level has worked against the establishment of research groups. The results of the PBRF exercise have shaken the confidence of many new researchers and the institutions in which they work. Such institutions are likely to have less rather than more research funding as a result. The Ministry has noted its concern about the small pool of researchers on which it can draw, and the risks of insufficient exposure to alternative research approaches and to quality peer review (Whitney & McIntosh, 2002, p. 14). The establishment of centres of research excellence would not necessarily enhance overall research capacity, nor would it ensure that degree programmes are taught by those active in research. Kane (2003, p. 21) urged teacher educators to take up the challenge:

We need to accept PBRF as a wakeup call and take this opportunity to set about ensuring that our programmes are grounded in research, that our staff are supported properly to be active researchers, and that we work together as a discipline, to raise the status of teacher education in higher education by offering our work for critique of both classroom practitioners and researchers, nationally and internationally and demonstrating the rigour and excellence of our research and scholarship. If we fail to do this, then we should not be kidding ourselves that we are capable of offering quality degree level courses to those who will eventually teach our children.

The PBRF has provided additional impetus to mergers between stand-alone teacher education colleges and universities. Since the results were announced, Auckland College of Education has merged with the University of Auckland and Wellington College of Education has merged with Victoria University of Wellington. The two remaining colleges are openly exploring merger options. From the beginning of 2005, the majority of teacher education students will be in the university sector rather than outside it. Maintaining a distinctive teacher education culture may prove

more difficult than in the past and will require strong theoretical and research justification.

In 1995, when Waikato was the only university school of education, and regarded with some suspicion by institutions that had not taken such a step, I identified a series of dilemmas facing teacher education in a university (Alcorn, 1995). Central to these concerns were combining research imperatives with the demands of professional involvement and contesting narrow views within the university over what constitutes appropriate and rigorous research. These dilemmas remain but they have been thrown into sharper focus by the PBRF. Maintaining balance and equilibrium among these contradictory demands and pressures is still a crucial goal. Teacher educators cannot afford to ignore the research imperative but they need to ensure that their research is not a discrete activity but integrated with their teaching. Scholars are unlikely to trump teachers in the near future but they could do so in over the next 20 years if New Zealand does not learn from experience elsewhere. We need ongoing critical enquiry into practice in its widest sense, from one's own teaching to systemic investigations into policy, together with a sense of critical enquiry and a commitment to the construction of knowledge in a social context.

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